

THE CALIFORNIA NUTMEG TREE IN CULTIVATION

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The interest in native plants is ever present among California garden lovers. Catering to this interest are several nurseries devoted entirely or in part to the culture and sale of native plants. Such well known shrubs as *Fremontia*, *Ceanothus*, *Carpenteria*, *Romneya*, *Ribes sanguineum* and *Mahonia* are often to be found thriving under cultivation. Also sprinkled in the gardens of the state are many specimens of California pines, cypress, sequoias and even oaks.

Among the coniferous natives of the state, *Torreya californica* Torr., a handsome tree known commonly as California nutmeg, is found in a few well established gardens. It is not unusual to find trees of great diameter and height in their native habitat, but to find a large *Torreya* in a garden is a rare experience. Of cultivated speci-



FIG. 1. *Torreya californica* growing at corner of the old Seale estate, California Avenue and Byron streets, Palo Alto, California.

mens the most outstanding is in the park opposite the post office in Watsonville, California. Like a forest tree, singled out and favored with an abundance of sunlight and moisture, this beautiful tree is fifty feet high with a trunk three feet in diameter.

On the San Francisco peninsula, particularly in the Palo Alto district, several noteworthy specimens of *Torreya californica* are

growing as garden subjects. By far the most conspicuous is a large tree in the Seale Tract on California Avenue at Byron Street, Palo Alto. This tree tapers to a point and is forty feet tall. The trunk is six feet in diameter at ground level and four feet in diameter four feet above the ground. Here the trunk leads off into many large branches causing the plant to appear bushy, thus resembling an English yew. The branches spread to a diameter of more than fifty feet. This tree was growing adjacent to the old Seale mansion, which has just been torn down. It might be safe to estimate its age as approximately sixty or seventy years, since the Seale estate is about one hundred years old, and all members of the family were garden minded.

In Menlo Park on the campus of the Park Military School for Boys on Ravenswood Avenue, opposite the Southern Pacific depot, there is another large cultivated specimen of the California nutmeg. The tree, easily recognized by its dark foliage, stands thirty feet tall, has a spread of twenty-seven feet and arches decidedly to the west. The trunk is three feet in diameter at ground level. Roughly estimated this tree is about fifty years old. The garden, that of the old Mills estate, is of long cultivation. On the grounds of the Leroy Nickel estate on Middlefield Road in Menlo Park there is to be seen another fine specimen of *Torreya californica*. This tree is about thirty-five feet tall with a three foot trunk at ground level and with a spread of twenty-five feet to its branches. Mrs. Nickel reports that it was planted about thirty years ago. A fourth Menlo Park specimen, no doubt much younger than the others, is to be found on the Donohoe estate on Middlefield Road. This tree is eighteen feet tall.

Torreya californica may be regarded as very satisfactory in cultivation and is to be recommended for the garden. All of the specimens mentioned above produce abundant fruit and the seeds germinate easily.

Menlo Park, California,
March 13, 1937.

REVIEW: TWO NEW CATALOGUES OF CASCADIAN PLANTS

The Flora of Crater Lake National Park. By F. LYLE WYND. The American Midland Naturalist. Volume XVII, Number 6. Pp. 881-949. The University Press, Notre Dame, Indiana. 1936.

The Plants of Mt. Rainier National Park, Washington. By HAROLD ST. JOHN AND FRED A. WARREN. The American Midland Naturalist. Volume XVIII, Number 6. Pp. 952-985. The University Press, Notre Dame, Indiana. 1937.

The first is a very incomplete list, with keys, taxonomic notes and a synonymy of the names used in the principal manuals, of